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CX RANCH AND WOLF MOUNTAIN PROPOSED MINE PROJECTS

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PREPARED BY
MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF STATE LANDS
IN COOPERATION WITH
OFFICE OF SURFACE MINING
U. S. DEPT. OF INTERIOR

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Proposed
CX Ranch and Wolf Mountain Mine Projects

The Montana Department of State Lands (MDSL) and the Department of Interior, Office of Surface Mining (OSM), are very interested in hearing of your concerns regarding two proposed coal mines in southeastern Montana. Consolidation Coal Company (Consol) and Kiewet Mining and Engineering, Inc. (KME) have proposed to open new mines in Big Horn County near the Montana-Wyoming border. (See map, pages 4 and 5.)

Both companies recently submitted applications for operating permits to OSM and to MDSL. The agencies have determined the two proposed mines would constitute major actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. Therefore, the preparation of Environmental Impact Statements (EIS's) would be required before decisions could be made to issue permits.

This brochure was prepared to:

- announce a public meeting in Sheridan, Wyoming, to receive public comment in response to the proposed plans for mining,
- provide you with information about the proposed mines,
- inform you of the procedures MDSL and OSM uses to prepare an EIS, including identifying general issues and concerns that will be addressed, and
- ask your opinion of the issues or concerns that should be included in the EIS's

Meeting Announcement

A public meeting to hear the proposed mining plans of Consol and KME and to receive public comment will be held in Sheridan, Wyoming, on June 9, 1982 at 7:00 p.m. The meeting will be held at the Sheridan Junior College, Room 1 of the Whitney Building. The Montana Department of State Lands will conduct the meeting.

If you can't attend the meeting, your comments can be sent to the EIS Team, Montana Department of State Lands 1539 11th Avenue, Helena, Montana 59620. Please write your comments on the page provided at the end of this brochure and return to the Department no later than July 9, 1982.

Consolidation Coal Company's (Consol) CX Ranch Mine.

Consol's proposed CX Ranch Mine lies in Big Horn County in southeastern Montana about 1¼ miles west of Decker and 22 miles north of Sheridan, Wyoming. The mine area is located northwest of Highway 314. The surface facilities and rail loop straddle the highway. Two perrenial streams, Squirrel Creek and the Tongue River run alongside the proposed mine. (See map.)

Mining Plan

Consol proposes a 12-year mine plan for the CX Ranch Mine including 8 for coal production. The entire mine plan (permit boundary) encompases 1,905 acres. Within this area 1,797 acres will be disturbed for mining, roads, soil and overburden stockpiles and other disturbances; 56 acres for support facilities; and 52 acres for a rail loop and spur.

Annual coal production would begin the third year of the operation with 3 million tons. Coal production would increase in the fourth year and maximum production would reach 8 million tons beginning in the fifth year. The total mineable reserve for the CX Ranch is 46.9 million tons. Possible future expansion of the CX Ranch could increase maximum annual production to 16 million tons and extend the life of the mine. Future expansion would occur south and west of the present mine plan area.

The CX Ranch Mine would be an open pit surface mine. The operation would begin with construction of support and coal processing facilities in the first 2½ years. Support facilities would include a shop complex, changehouse, warehouse, and office complex. The coal processing facilites would include a dump station, crushers, conveyors, storage silos and a coal loadout area.

A rail loop and spur would be built in the southeast end of the permit area. An enclosed aerial conveyor would transport coal across Highway 314 to the storage silos or the coal loadout area.

The truck and shovel mining operation would require the movement of approximately 30 millon cubic yards of overburden annually. After removal of existing vegetation from areas to be disturbed, topsoil would be removed with scrapers in staged sequences. During initial mining, the topsoil would be stockpiled in designated locations and stabilized until needed for reclamation. In later stages of mining, topsoil would be placed directly on the recontoured backfill.

The overburden material would be broken by drilling and blasting. It would then be loaded into dump trucks by large electric power shovels and hauled to temporary stockpiles for storage until backfilling begins. When mining has progressed far enough, the overburden would be hauled directly to the mined-out areas for backfiling and recontouring.

Two coal seams would be recovered, the main recoverable seam being about 80 feet thick. The coal would be blasted and loaded into bottom-dump trucks by electric power shovels. It would then be hauled to the crushing facility for processing and later transferred by conveyors to the storage silos or direct loadout into unit trains.

The mine would operate year round, with backfilling, recontouring and reclamation proceeding concurrently with coal removal.

Employment

Approximately 500 employees would be required to construct and operate the CX Ranch Mine.

Kiewet Mining and Engineering Company's (KME) Wolf Mountain Mine Project

KME's proposed Wolf Mountain Mine would be located near Decker, Big Horn County, Montana, approximately 22 miles north of Sheridan, Wyoming. The mine area would be located on the west side of Highway 314 and the coal processing facilities, support facilities, conveyor, and loadout area would be located on the east side of the highway. Two perennial streams, Squirrel Creek and the Tongue River, are located adjacent to the proposed mine. (See map.)

Mining Plan

KME proposes a 20-year mine plan for the Wolf Mountain Mine Project. The entire mine plan (permit boundary) encompases 2,141 acres. The mining disturbance area would include approximately 1,470 acres including 313 acres for facilities, 245 acres for associated mining disturbance, topsoil stockpiles and haul roads; and 912 acres for direct mining disturbance.

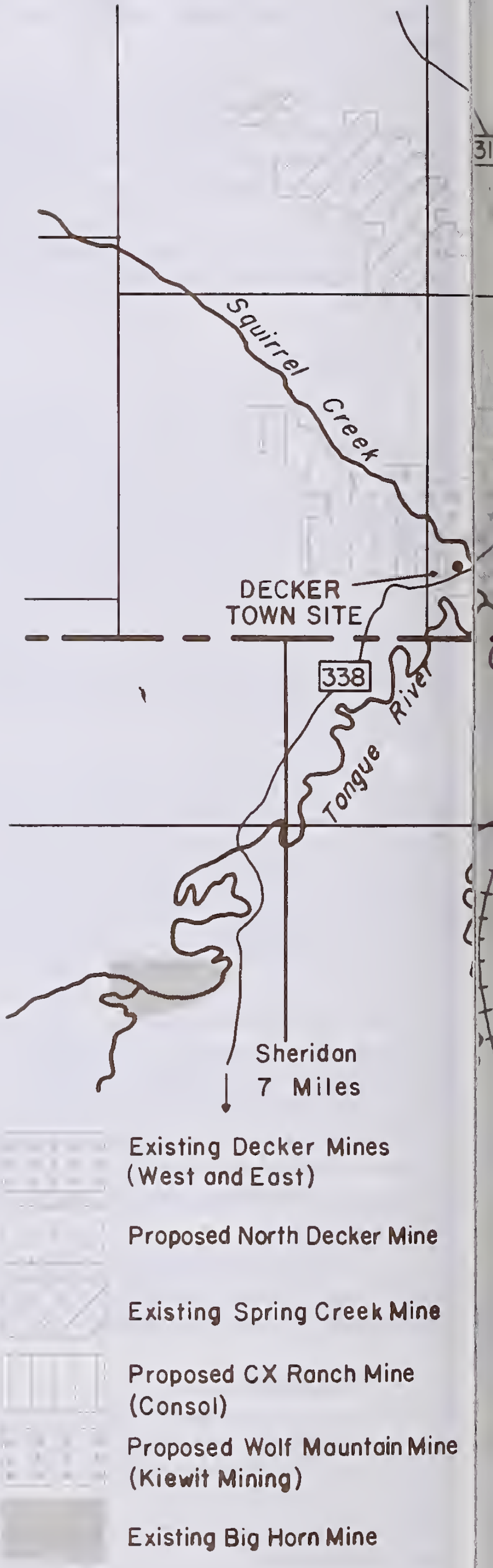
Coal production would begin during the second year. Annual coal production in the second year would begin at 2 million tons and would reach 3 million tons in subsequent years for 15 years. Total recoverable coal at the Wolf Mountain Mine is estimated at 51.9 million tons.

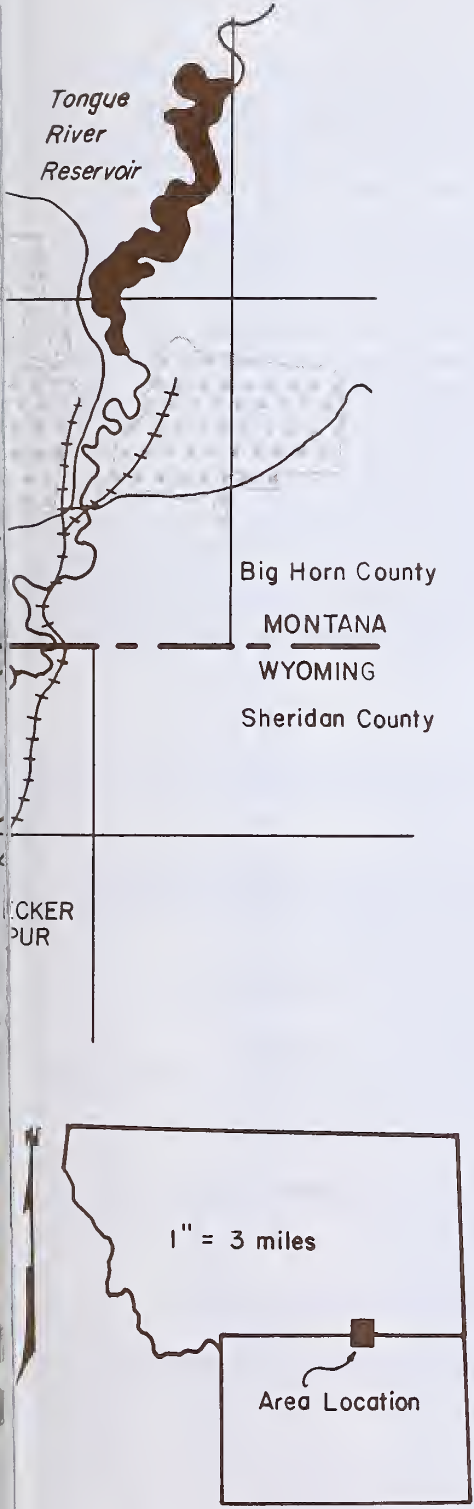
The Wolf Mountain Mine project would be an open pit surface mine. The operation would begin with construction of a rail loop, conveyor, facilities area, erection site and access and haul roads. A mine haul road would be constructed under a proposed Highway 314 overpass to haul coal from the mine area to the coal processing area. Coal from the coal processing area would be transported to the coal loadout and storage silos over a 1.9-mile enclosed overland conveyor that would be located on the eastside of Highway 314. A truck/shovel operation would be used to remove 225 million cubic yards of overburden and interburden. Topsoil stripping and stockpiling would preceed construction of the support and coal processing facilities, and removal of overburden. Partial haulback of overburden within the pit would take place in years 2 and 4 and total haulback would commence in year 5. Overburden would be stockpiled for storage until the fifth year when the pit had sufficiently advanced to allow direct haulback and backfill of the overburden.

Multiple seams of coal would be recovered, with a collective average thickness of 70 to 80 feet. The initial pit development would require 1¼ years to expose the first million tons of coal.

Employment

The mine would operate year round. A maximum of 300 employees would be requried to construct and operate the Wolf Mountain Mine. This number would decrease to 265 operational employees after construction of the facilities is complete and coal production starts.


31
Squirrel Creek
DECKER TOWN SITE
338
Tongue River
Sheridan 7 Miles
Existing Decker Mines (West and East)
Proposed North Decker Mine
Existing Spring Creek Mine
Proposed CX Ranch Mine (Consol)
Proposed Wolf Mountain Mine (Kiewit Mining)
Existing Big Horn Mine


Tongue River Reservoir
Big Horn County
MONTANA
WYOMING
Sheridan County
CKER
PUR
N
1" = 3 miles
Area Location

EIS Process

Separate EIS's will be prepared for the CX Ranch and Wolf Mountain Mine projects by the Montana Department of State Lands (MDSL) and the Office of Surface Mining (OSM) under authority of the Montana Environmental Policy Act of 1971 (MEPA) and the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA).

The preparation of each EIS is necessitated by the submittal of coal mine permit applications which, if approved, would constitute "major actions" of both the federal and state government.

For each EIS, a draft document will be prepared. The public is allowed 60 days to review and comment on the Draft. A public hearing to receive public comment will also be held within 20 days after the Draft is issued. All public comments received during the comment period will be considered by MDSL and OSM in the preparation of the Final Environmental Impact Statements.

Each EIS will discuss the proposed operations, potential impacts on the surrounding environment and measures to mitigate impacts. The approval and issuance of an operating permit will depend on the applicant meeting Federal and State legal and policy requirements, including the preparation of a Final Environmental Impact Statement.

Major Issues:

A number of general issues and concerns that would be addressed in the EIS's include:

--surface and ground water quantity and quality effects,
--topsoil/overburden quality and revegetation success,
--postmining landform stability,
--fisheries and aquatic ecology effects,
--threatened and endangered species effects,
--air quality degradation,
--employment and population changes,
--community services impacts (i.e., schools, fire and police protection, local government, etc.),
--effects on local and state revenues,
--social effects,
--impairment of prime farmlands and alluvial valley floors,
--changes in land uses,
--increased vehicular traffic,
--recreational demands,
--effects on archeological and historical sites,
--aesthetics, and
--cumulative effects of proposed and existing mines.

Cut along dotted line

Please mail your comments to the EIS Team, Montana Department of State Lands, 1539 11th Avenue, Helena, MT 59620.

Your Comments and Concerns

We would appreciate hearing of your specific concerns and comments about the proposed mines. Please identify which concerns are the most important and how the proposed mines may affect you and the area in which you live.

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PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING:

Your Name ______________________________ (please print)

Address ______________________________

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Telephone Number ______________ (if you would like a member of the EIS Team to call and discuss your comments in more detail)

Thank you for your cooperation.

Return Address:

Montana Department of State Lands
EIS Team
1539 11th Avenue
Helena, MT 59620